CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

**Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 23 May 2001, at 10.20 a.m.**

President: Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I declare open the 874th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset to extend, on behalf of us all, a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, His Excellency, Mr. Luvsangin Erdenechuluun, who will be addressing the Conference today. His presence among us today demonstrates the abiding commitment of the Government of Mongolia to our common endeavours and the importance that the Government and, personally, the Foreign Minister attach to this forum.

It also gives me great pleasure cordially to welcome the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, who is attending our plenary meeting today. I am certain that the Conference joins me in conveying to him our appreciation for his steadfast interest in the work of this single multilateral disarmament negotiating body of the international community.

I now invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, His Excellency Mr. Luvsangin Erdenechuluun, to address the Conference.

Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia): Mr. President, it is a distinct honour and privilege and, indeed, a pleasure for me to be amongst the disarmament colleagues and share with you Monglia's perception and views on some key issues related to international security, arms limitation and disarmament.

I am pleased that I am making a statement at the plenary meeting presided over by a distinguished representative of the People's Republic of China, a friendly country with which Mongolia enjoys close and good-neighbourly relations.

I also would like to take this opportunity to extend my warm greetings to my good friend and colleague, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and express my appreciation of his valuable work as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. I am also very happy to see the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, here today.

This year is special for the Mongolian people as its marks the eightieth anniversary of the people's revolution and the fortieth anniversary of our membership in the United Nations. I mention these events not solely because of their historical significance for my people, but also because of their relevance and role in shaping my country's foreign policy. One of its priorities has always been the strengthening of international peace and security and promotion of the disarmament process with a view to attaining the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament.

But as the world enters the new century and, indeed, the new millennium, does it find itself closer to that collective goal? Has the international community succeeded in making the global disarmament process a sustainable one? And do we live now in a world less or more safe? There are, I am afraid, no simple answers to these questions. As we review progress in the

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area of arms limitation, disarmament and non-proliferation, our reaction can at best be termed as mixed. While there has been certain movement forward in some areas, there has been little or no progress in others.

In its Final Document the 2000 NPT Review Conference included a number of agreed conclusions and recommendations related to nuclear disarmament. For the first time ever all the nuclear-weapon States made "an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to total nuclear disarmament to which all States parties are committed under article VI". The Conference also agreed on the necessity of establishing in the Conference on Disarmament an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament. It called for the immediate establishment of such a body. The Conference also called for further efforts by the nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally and for further reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons based on unilateral initiatives as an integral part of the nuclear disarmament process. A call has been made for the engagement as soon as appropriate, of all the nuclear-weapon States in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenal. These constitute an important statement of purpose and, if translated into practice, will open the way to practical nuclear disarmament measures.

With respect to strategic arms reductions, Mongolia underlines the importance of an early entry into force of the CTBT and START II treaties. We also look forward to further practical steps leading to substantial and meaningful reductions in nuclear arsenals within the START III process and other multilateral negotiations with the involvement of the other nuclear-weapon States.

In the context of the CTBT, Mongolia looks forward to the upcoming Conference to be held this fall in New York to facilitate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The importance of its earliest possible entry into force becomes even more compelling in the light of the activities that could seriously undermine the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The credibility of the CTBT and other international instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction depends to a great extent on the effectiveness of their verification regime. We welcome the efforts aimed at ensuring the reliable operation of the existing control and monitoring systems under the CTBT and the CWC convention and undertaking measures to improve the verification mechanism of the BWC.

The growing emphasis placed of late on nuclear weapons in military doctrines is a cause of increasing concern. It is, therefore, only natural that countries like Mongolia favour the adoption of such steps as the de-alerting of nuclear weapons, the removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles, joint undertakings by the nuclear-weapon Powers of a pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. These are essential safety measures that would reduce the risk of the unauthorized or miscalculated use of nuclear weapons. In addition, provision should be made for legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear States - parties to the NPT - as has become customary for nuclear-weapon States in signing protocols to nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties. In this context, Mongolia welcomed the proposal by the

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Secretary-General to convene a major international conference aimed at identifying ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. We hope that this timely proposal will be given serious consideration by the international community with a view to determining its optimal scope and timing.

My delegation also believes that it is important for the Conference on Disarmament to engage in earnest negotiations on the early conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile materials cut-off treaty. Pending the negotiation of that treaty we would welcome a moratorium by the nuclear-weapon States on the production of weapons-grade fissile materials and for greater transparency through disclosure of their present stocks. Better still, we would urge the United Nations to establish a register for all stocks of weapons-grade fissile materials. This would help establish an important balance with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Mongolia emphasizes the vital importance of preserving the spirit of the ABM Treaty, a cornerstone of strategic stability, the validity of which has not lessened over the years. Bearing in mind the fact that undermining the treaty could trigger an uncontrollable nuclear-arms race, Mongolia welcomed last year the decision by the United States to postpone the deployment of a national missile defence system. The recent United States proposals for a new defence policy, including the establishment of missile defences, in our view, would inevitably impact upon global security and strategic stability. While welcoming the readiness of the United States Administration to consult with others regarding their plans to deploy a national missile defence system, Mongolia believes that such consultations should fully take into account broader security implications of these plans, the increasing concern of States over the dangers of militarization of outer space and the necessity of preserving global strategic stability.

Mongolia shares the legitimate concern of the world community over the global proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are the principal instruments of death wherever conflicts and wars occur. We hope that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled for this summer, will result in practical measures designed to tighten control, curb their spread and destroy surplus weapons.

Well over a decade after the demise of the cold war the world has been witnessing a new surge in defence spending accompanied by a booming new business in arms exports, disturbing signs of a shift in military doctrines and priorities. This, in our view, increasingly underlines the urgent need to agree on objectives, agenda and timing for convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It could assess both the achievements and setbacks experienced over the past years in global disarmament efforts and chart a new vision in the early years of the new century towards the further reduction and elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the reduction and elimination of some categories of conventional weapons.

Mongolia strongly advocates the consolidation of existing and the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, which serve as an important component of nuclear non-proliferation

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with a positive impact on regional security and stability. We believe that the principles and guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1999, will play a significant role in that regard.

In 1992 Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a move that was widely supported by the international community. Since then we have come a long way. As a follow-up to its declaration the Parliament of Mongolia adopted in February 2000 a law on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status thus institutionalizing it at the national level. At its fifty-third and fifty-fifth sessions, the General Assembly adopted resolutions on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status. At the last session of the General Assembly the five permanent members of the Security Council made a joint statement providing security assurances to Mongolia in connection with its nuclear-weapon-free status. We consider it an important step along the road to institutionalizing that status at the international level. In this context we believe that it is imperative to start negotiations on legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear States within the Conference on Disarmament.

Last but not least, I wish to emphasize the vital role played over the years by the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament issues, in concluding a series of multilateral arms limitation and disarmament treaties. It is of crucial importance now to break the ongoing deadlock that has gripped the Conference on Disarmament over the last few years, through a display of the necessary political will and redoubling of our joint efforts to reinvigorate the work of this unique forum. In this regard, Mongolia considers the Amorim proposal contained in document CD/1624, as a sound basis for further consultations. We appreciate the efforts being undertaken by you, Mr. President, to this effect and wish you every success in this endeavour.

Mongolia stands committed to the promotion of international peace and security and attaining the shared goal of general and complete disarmament through the concerted efforts of all nations.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the distinguished Foreign Minister of Mongolia for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor?

As that does not seem to be the case, I would like to make a concluding statement, as the term of my presidency draws to its close.

Within the Conference on Disarmament there is a fairly widespread view that the entire international situation and security environment with which we are confronted is unfavourable for the Conference on Disarmament. In reality, the main focus of attention is whether the ABM Treaty is to be preserved and strengthened as a cornerstone of strategic stability, as stated in the Final Act of the 2000 NPT Conference, or whether we must move beyond the constraints of the 30-year-old ABM Treaty.

(The President)

The answer to this question will have an extensive and profound effect on international security and strategic stability: to a very large degree, it will also affect the Conference on Disarmament, since the Conference, as the sole global multilateral negotiating forum in the field of arms control and disarmament, is bound to be affected by aspects of international strategic stability and the security of all countries.

During my four weeks as President and in the inter-sessional period, I have held consultations with colleagues from 40 different delegations. To date, there has been no delegation which has requested me as President to seek comments from any side on any specific proposal. Meanwhile, all delegations have manifested their deep concern at the Conference's inability to move forward and expressed their strong hope that consensus can be reached as soon as possible on the programme of work.

In this regard, just like last week, today I still have no "breakthrough" on which to report to you all. All that I can do is to convey the following points to you:

First, "the Amorim formula remains a basis for further intensified consultations towards reaching agreement on the programme of work" - this remains everyone's common understanding. To date, I have not heard anyone say that we should withdraw from this position. It would seem that this is the only bright spot in the current difficult period that we are experiencing.

Second, with regard to our "programme of work", we remain unable to achieve consensus. The relevant divergent views can be summed up in various ways. I would describe the situation as follows: one school of thought holds that negotiations on an FMCT should be commenced. At the same time, issues relating to nuclear disarmament and PAROS can also be discussed. There is another school of thought which maintains that, at the same time as negotiating on an FMCT, PAROS should also be negotiated, or we should at least indicate that it is such negotiation which is our goal. At the same time, with regard to the wording of the "nuclear disarmament" mandate in the Amorim proposal, a few amendments have been suggested.

It remains my impression that most delegations would have no difficulty at all in accepting either of the two approaches. That said, the above-mentioned divergences remain profound. They are related to developments in the overall security and strategic stability situation and are the cause of the continuing inability to reach consensus on the programme of work.

Third, with regard to the so-called "complementary measures", these are still being explored. In general, because of aspects of the programme of work or, to be more precise, because of the deadlock surrounding the three major issues, which remains difficult to break, people appear to have demonstrated a growing interest in the possibility of adopting complementary measures during this "waiting period". At present, however, we still do not have any plan for "complementary measures" which would be capable of enjoying consensus

(The President)

agreement, yet neither do we have any grounds to assert that we are unable to achieve consensus on any complementary measure, or that we are still very far from consensus in this regard.

Distinguished colleagues, in view of the foregoing, I would like to propose to my successor as President, distinguished Ambassador Reyes, the following:

First, to preserve the common understanding on "recognizing the support of the Conference for CD/1624 as a basis for further intensified consultations";

Second, taking this common understanding as our basis, to continue exploring ways of achieving consensus on the entire programme of work, including the three main issues. In this regard, every suggestion must be closely studied;

Third, at the same time, in the face of the current difficult situation, to use the "waiting period" idea for the continued exploration of the possibility of a more speedy adoption of any "complementary measures".

I hope that everyone is able to work together in this direction.

Finally, I express my heartfelt thanks to all delegations and to all colleagues for the cooperation and the assistance that they have given me. During my presidency, the Secretary-General of our Conference, His Excellency Mr. Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Román-Morey, all colleagues in the secretariat, and the entire staff of the Conference, all provided me with every possible assistance and support, and I wish to convey my most sincere thanks to them all.

At this stage, it only remains for me to wish my successor in this function, Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodrigues of Colombia, all the best in his endeavours and to assure him of my readiness to assist him in his tasks.

Dear colleagues, this concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 31 May 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.